

Explore Japan Your Way (Solo or With Friends or Family)

Discover Japan at your own pace—whether you're traveling solo, as a couple, or with friends. This 12-day itinerary blends vibrant city life, traditional culture, scenic escapes, food experiences, and unforgettable day trips with the perfect balance of structure and flexibility.

From Tokyo's futuristic streets and Kyoto's timeless temples to Osaka's nightlife, Hakone's mountain views, and Hiroshima's history, this route gives you a deeper and more immersive Japan experience.

Day 1-4: Tokyo



Day 1: Arrival in Tokyo - Neon Streets & First Impressions

- **Morning**

Arrive in Tokyo and settle into a lively area like Shibuya for nonstop energy and nightlife, or Shinjuku for easy transport and endless food options.

→ [Find social stays](#) & [Central hotels here](#)

- **Midday & Afternoon**

Start your trip in Shibuya, crossing the famous scramble intersection before diving into hidden alleys, cafés, and ramen spots.

Continue into Harajuku and Takeshita Street for quirky fashion, street snacks, and youth culture, then slow things down with a peaceful visit to Meiji Shrine.

→ [\[Join Tokyo Street Food Tour\]](#)

- **Evening:**

As night falls, experience Tokyo's electric nightlife in Shinjuku. Explore tiny izakayas, neon alleys, and late-night ramen bars.

→ [\[Join Tokyo Bar Hopping Night Tour\]](#)



Solo Trip Tip: Joining a nightlife or food tour on your first evening is one of the easiest ways to meet people quickly in Japan.

Day 2: Traditional Tokyo & City Views

- **Morning**

Start your day in Asakusa at Senso-ji Temple, Tokyo's oldest and most iconic temple.

Wander through Nakamise Street for local snacks, souvenirs, and traditional sweets.

→ [\[Rent Traditional Kimono Here\]](#)

- **Midday & Afternoon**

Head toward Ueno Park for museums and gardens, or explore Akihabara if you're into anime, gaming, and tech culture.

Prefer everything organized for you?

→ [\[Join Tokyo Full-Day Highlights Tour\]](#)

- **Evening**

Catch sunset views from Shibuya Sky or Tokyo Skytree before dinner in a local izakaya.

→ [\[Join Shibuya Local Food Tour\]](#)

Day 3: Mount Fuji Day Trip or Modern Tokyo

- **Morning**

Take a scenic day trip toward Mount Fuji and Lake Kawaguchi for iconic mountain views and peaceful lakeside scenery.

→ [\[Join Mt. Fuji & Lake Kawaguchi Tour\]](#)

- **Midday & Afternoon**

Explore traditional villages, lakeside cafés, or ropeways overlooking Mount Fuji before returning to Tokyo.

If you'd rather stay in the city, spend the day exploring neighborhoods like Shimokitazawa, Ginza, or Daikanyama.

- **Evening**

Experience a different side of Tokyo with karaoke bars, themed cafés, or hidden izakayas.

→ [\[Join Tokyo Izakaya Experience\]](#)

Day 4: Local Tokyo & Hidden Neighborhoods

- **Morning**
Start slower with coffee shops and vintage stores in Nakameguro or Shimokitazawa.
- **Midday & Afternoon**
Visit teamLab Planets for an immersive digital art experience, then spend the afternoon shopping or café hopping.
→ [\[Get teamLab Planets Ticket\]](#)
- **Evening**
End your Tokyo stay with a relaxed river cruise or a final night exploring Golden Gai and Omoide Yokocho.
→ [\[Join Tokyo Evening Cruise\]](#)

Day 5-6: Hakone & Mount Fuji Region

Day 5: Hakone Onsen Escape

- **Morning**
Travel from Tokyo to Hakone, known for its hot springs, mountain scenery, and Fuji views.
→ [\[Get All-In-One Hakone Cruise Bus Tour with Bullet Train\]](#)
- **Midday & Afternoon**
Ride the Hakone Ropeway, cruise across Lake Ashi, and explore volcanic landscapes around Owakudani.
- **Evening**
Check into a traditional ryokan and experience an onsen bath followed by a multi-course kaiseki dinner.
→ [\[Join Onsen Bath Experience\]](#)

Day 6: Scenic Hakone to Kyoto

- **Morning**
Enjoy a slow morning soaking in the peaceful atmosphere before continuing to Kyoto via Shinkansen.
- **Midday & Afternoon**
Arrive in Kyoto and settle into Gion or Downtown Kyoto.

Spend the afternoon wandering through quiet temple streets and riverside paths.

- **Evening**

Explore Gion at night, where lantern-lit alleys create one of Japan's most atmospheric evenings.

→ [\[Join Kyoto Evening Walking Tour with Geisha Culture\]](#)

Day 7-9: Kyoto

Day 7: Temples, Bamboo Forests & Historic Kyoto

- **Morning**

Start early at Fushimi Inari Shrine before the crowds arrive and walk through its endless red torii gates.

- **Midday & Afternoon**

Continue to Arashiyama Bamboo Grove, riverside cafés, and nearby temples.

→ [\[Join Kyoto Highlights Tour with Hidden Gems\]](#)

- **Evening**

Relax with traditional Kyoto dining or a quiet tea house experience.

→ [\[Join Kyoto Food Tour with 13 Dishes\]](#)



Day 8: Traditional Culture & Hidden Kyoto

- **Morning**

Visit Kiyomizu-dera Temple and explore the preserved streets of Higashiyama.

- **Midday & Afternoon**

Slow things down with a tea ceremony, kimono experience, or Japanese cooking class.

→ [\[Join Traditional Tea Ceremony\]](#)

Or

→ [\[Join Rame & Gyoza Cooking Class\]](#)

- **Evening**

Walk along the Kamogawa River or enjoy Kyoto's quieter nightlife scene.

Day 9: Nara Day Trip

- **Morning**
Take a short trip to Nara, famous for its free-roaming deer and historic temples.
→ [\[Join Nara & Kyoto Day Tour\]](#)
- **Midday & Afternoon**
Visit Todai-ji Temple and stroll through Nara Park before returning to Kyoto.
- **Evening**
Enjoy your final Kyoto evening with riverside dining or nighttime temple views.

Day 10-12: Osaka & Hiroshima

Day 10: Osaka Food Scene & Nightlife

- **Morning**
Travel to Osaka and settle into Namba or Umeda.
- **Midday & Afternoon**
Dive into Osaka's legendary street food scene with takoyaki, okonomiyaki, and kushikatsu around Dotonbori.
→ [\[Join Osaka Street Food Tour: 15 Dishes & 3 Drinks\]](#)

Visit Osaka Castle afterward for skyline views and local history.
- **Evening**
Experience Osaka's energetic nightlife with bars, arcades, and neon-filled streets.
→ [\[Join Osaka Pub Crawl\]](#)

Day 11: Hiroshima & Miyajima

- **Morning**
Take the Shinkansen to Hiroshima and visit the Peace Memorial Park and Museum.
→ [\[Join Hiroshima Peace & History Tour\]](#)
- **Midday & Afternoon**
Continue to Miyajima Island, known for its floating torii gate and scenic mountain views.
→ [\[Join Hiroshima & Miyajima UNESCO Tour\]](#)
- **Evening**
Return to Osaka for one final city night.

Day 12: Final Day in Osaka

- **Morning**

Spend your final morning shopping, café hopping, or visiting Kuromon Market for last-minute food experiences.

Or

Make the last day even more memorable by visiting famous Universal Studios and enjoying thrilling rides and live shows.

→ [\[Get Universal Studios Ticket\]](#)

- **Midday & Afternoon**

Relax before your departure or explore quieter neighborhoods like Nakazakicho.

- **Evening**

Wrap up your Japan adventure with one final ramen dinner before heading to the airport.

Japan is waiting for you !

Japan offers an incredible mix of energy and calm, tradition and innovation, nature and nightlife. One moment you're standing beneath towering skyscrapers, and the next you're walking through centuries-old temple paths surrounded by silence.

This 12-day itinerary gives first-time visitors a deeper experience of Japan while still keeping the pace manageable and flexible.

Adapt it seasonally—cherry blossoms in spring, festivals in summer, autumn foliage, or snowy winter landscapes—and it becomes a trip you'll never forget.

Smart Travel Tips for Japan

Socializing made easy

If you're traveling solo (or just want to meet people), small-group experiences are your best friend—think cooking classes, walking tours, or even a pub crawl. It's the fastest way to turn a solo trip into a shared one.

→ [\[Join activities & tours\]](#)

Getting around efficiently

Japan's train system is fast, reliable, and extremely traveler-friendly. For this itinerary, the Shinkansen is the easiest way to move between major cities.

An IC card like Suica or ICOCA makes local transport effortless.

→ [\[Get JR Pass & IC Card\]](#)

Staying connected

Pocket WiFi or an eSIM helps tremendously with maps, train schedules, and translation apps.

→ [\[Get Japan eSIM\]](#)

What to pack





Bring comfortable walking shoes—you'll likely walk more in Japan than almost anywhere else.

Layers are also important since weather can vary significantly between mornings, evenings, mountains, and cities.

→  [\[Check the Essential Travel Packing List\]](#)

Plan & Book Your Trip

To make planning easier, here are the platforms most travelers use to book everything in one place:

-  Find the best flight deals and routes
→ [\[Book your flights\]](#)
-  Compare hotels, hostels, and social stays
→ [\[Book your accommodation\]](#)
-  Lock in top tours and experiences (walking guide tours, food tours, day trips)
→ [\[Browse activities & tours\]](#)
-  Exploring places more comfortably? Renting a car gives you the most flexibility
→ [\[Rent a car\]](#)

- *Written by Guess Where It Is*